

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL AND DON KNABE      February 9, 2016

Research as well as anecdotal evidence has consistently shown a strong link between homelessness and domestic violence. Domestic violence survivors are controlled by their abusers, often by being forbidden to work. Many lose their jobs due to harassment or days missed because of injury or threat. When survivors flee abuse, they often leave with limited assets and belongings. They often also lack family support because of their isolation, safety concerns, or other family pressures. All of these factors can lead to homelessness, causing even greater trauma and risk of violence for these survivors and their children. These same factors make it difficult for them to transition from homelessness as the trauma they have experienced can keep them from trying to access homelessness assistance programs.

It is difficult to ascertain the number of domestic violence survivors and current victims in Los Angeles County. Some data sources define a domestic violence victim as someone who has filed a criminal complaint or someone who has called a domestic violence hotline asking for help. These figures do not come close to reflecting the actual number of victims and survivors of domestic violence, as they are often afraid or ashamed to come forward and report the abuse.

MOTION

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There is some data that can help us understand the current state of domestic violence in Los Angeles County. In 2014, the State of California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, reported that 39,145 domestic violence-related calls for assistance were made in Los Angeles County. Of that number, 25,657 calls reported a weapon was involved.

In 2015, there were 13,643 homeless women in Los Angeles County, 8,800 of which reported that they were victims of domestic violence. Survivors of domestic violence without children may seek assistance through the single adult coordinated entry system, while those with children may seek assistance through the Homeless Family Solutions System (HFSS). HFSS data indicates that approximately 22% of 3,200 families who were served in the years 2014-2015 had experienced violence at some point.

Los Angeles County will lose some capacity to meet the needs of domestic violence survivors in 2016 due to changes in funding priorities of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act funds. Historically, McKinney-Vento funds have paid for 981 transitional housing beds for survivors of domestic violence. 114 of those beds will be cut in 2016. While new rapid re-housing funds may be available to domestic violence survivors, this does not mitigate the need for domestic violence shelters for those families who need immediate shelter or for which rapid re-housing is not an appropriate intervention.

The County is an important supporter of domestic violence programs through its Department of Public Social Services' Domestic Violence Shelter Based Programs and Domestic Violence Supportive Services Programs. As the County seeks ways to reduce

homelessness, it is critical that we look at the unique needs of domestic violence survivors and strengthen the programs that serve them.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer to work with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Health Services (DHS), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Los Angeles County Domestic Violence Council and homeless and domestic violence service providers to collect the following information and report back to the Board of Supervisors in writing in 90 days:

- 1) An inventory of emergency shelter, bridge housing, and transitional housing beds targeted to individuals or families fleeing domestic violence, including information on whether the beds are funded by a funding source that is expected or at-risk of ending in the near future, such as McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act funds;
- 2) A review of current assessment tools and procedures for identifying domestic violence among individuals and families served through DPSS, DCFS, LAHSA, the Homeless Families Solutions System, DMH, DHS, and DPH and any recommended strategies if needed to strengthen or create new assessment tools and procedures for some or all of these departments;
- 3) A review of current procedures to provide appropriate support and linkage to domestic violence services for clients identified as being the victims of domestic

violence and any recommended strategies to strengthen or develop new efforts for some or all of these departments;

- 4) A description of how the Homeless Initiative's Homeless Prevention Program for Families will serve victims of domestic violence specifically addressing the unique safety needs of this population;
- 5) A set of strategies for strengthening collaboration between domestic violence providers and homeless service providers, including the feasibility of a convening to explore and document best practices for restoring families to safety and self-sufficiency;
- 6) A report back on rental assistance, including rapid re-housing and housing choice vouchers, available to victims of domestic violence;
- 7) A report back on DMH programs, or efforts in place to support domestic violence victims; and
- 8) A report back on options for increasing funding for Domestic Violence Shelter Based Programs.

**WE FURTHER MOVE** that County Counsel report back on options for increasing funds collected through Marriage License Fees and batterers' program fees for Domestic Violence Shelter Based Programs and methods for accurately reporting the amount of funds collected on a quarterly basis.